

What is claimed is:

1. A paper feeder comprising:

a sheet feeding roller disposed upstream of a skew correction roller in a sheet feeding direction at a location corresponding to a widthwise central portion of a recording sheet;

a separating rubber member disposed as opposed to the sheet feeding roller; and

buckling preventive mechanism extending over opposite sides of the separating rubber member for preventing the recording sheet from being deflected during feeding of the recording sheet by the sheet feeding roller.

2. The paper feeder in accordance with claim 1, wherein the buckling preventive mechanism comprises a deflection preventive sheet comprising a thin flexible sheet having certain rigidity, and a base plate of a feeder body, the deflection preventive sheet and the base plate defining therebetween a gap established to permit the recording sheet to pass therethrough with a clearance.

3. The paper feeder in accordance with claim 2, wherein the deflection preventive sheet extends more broadly than the length of the sheet feeding roller outwardly from opposite sides of the separating rubber member in a direction orthogonal to the sheet feeding direction.

4. The paper feeder in accordance with claim 2, wherein the deflection preventive sheet comprises a stiff portion having relatively high stiffness and a contact portion having relatively low stiffness and positioned downstream of the stiff portion.

5. The paper feeder in accordance with claim 4, wherein the contact portion of the deflection preventive sheet is formed with slits on opposite sides of the separating rubber member so as to be imparted with enhanced flexibility.

6. The paper feeder in accordance with claim 5, wherein the slits are utilizable also as openings allowing an operation of securing the separating rubber member and a mount for mounting the deflection preventive sheet thereon to an upper lid of the feeder body with screws to be performed therethrough.